GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION
quality education for all children

May 2015 Board of Directors Meetings: Decisions on the Strategic Plan and Summary

FINAL DECISIONS

BOD/2015/05-13–Strengthening the GPE Country-Level Operational Platform ("Workstream 1"): The Board of Directors agrees to the following priorities, in order, in the development of Work Stream 1 of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

1. emphasizing the need for improvements in the mechanisms used to administer and manage GPE grants at the country level, the Board requests the Secretariat to work with a representative Board reference group of no more than five Board or Alternate Board Members to:
    a. prepare an analysis of the functions, roles and accountabilities needed for the preparation, management and administration of GPE grants;
    b. analyze how those necessary functions, roles and accountabilities should more effectively be performed within the existing model, which operates under the leadership of the government of the Developing Country Partner. This analysis should focus on the pivotal role played by the Secretariat and the roles played by the Supervising and Managing Entities ("SE/ME"), the Local Education Groups and the Coordinating Agencies;
    c. review requirements for such key grant functions as legal, fiduciary, quality assurance, monitoring and reporting, safeguards, conflict resolution, and risk management;
    d. identify any gaps and improvements needed in the above, including necessary minimum standards and other criteria and reporting procedures that will ensure consistency;
    e. submit a plan and timeline for implementation of improvements by the October 15-16, 2015 Board Meeting;
    f. by Q2 2016, conduct an initial review of current constraints/opportunities for operating without an SE/ME, including the potential need for establishing a legal entity for the Global Partnership;
2. recognizing the importance of a Results Framework for the Strategic Plan and the essential role played by monitoring and evaluation, the Board agrees that:
    a. a draft Results Framework will be submitted to the Board for consultation at its meeting on October 15-16, 2015;
    b. the Results Framework will be finalized at the December 8-10, 2015 Board meeting;
    c. a full corporate monitoring and evaluation strategy will be considered at a date determined after the December 8-10, 2015 Board meeting;
3. recognizing the differentiated needs of Developing Country Partners and the need for other strategic investments, including in knowledge exchange, data and capacity development, the Board requests the Secretariat to prepare an issues paper outlining for discussion at the December 8-10, 2015 Board meeting the strategic finance issues facing the Global Partnership followed by implications, risks and opportunities associated with the introduction of different approaches to accepting financing for these strategic priorities; and

4. acknowledging that the Global Partnership needs to play a stronger role in capacity development and the coordination and dissemination of knowledge and best practice across the Partnership, the Board:

   a. notes that immediate proposed improvements to capacity development and the sharing of knowledge and best practice will be included in the draft implementation plan to be submitted to the Board for consideration at its December 8-10, 2015 meeting;

   b. further notes a broader knowledge and capacity development strategy will be submitted to the Board for discussion, at a date agreed after the December 8-10, 2015 Board meeting.

BOD/2015/05-14—Strategic Plan Concept Note for the 2016-2020 Period and Consultation Plan ("Workstream 2"): The Board of Directors requests the Secretariat to work with a representative Board reference group of no more than five Board or Alternate Board members during the first part of June to refine and finalize the Strategic Plan Concept Note based on the discussions at the May 22-23, 2015 Board meeting. The Concept Note will be used as the main consultation tool for strategic planning over the June 25 2015 to September 2015 period, and will form a central input into the draft Strategic Plan that will be presented to the Board for further discussion at the October 14-15 face-to face Board meeting in Washington D.C.

BOARD CHAIR SUMMARY ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020: STRENGTHENING GPE OPERATIONAL MODEL (WORK STREAM 1) PART ONE (BOD/2015/05 DOC 05)

3.1 The Secretariat provided the Board with a summary of the related Board paper (BOD/2015/05 DOC 05), outlining the six Key Opportunities for strengthening the GPE operational platform, specifically: 1. Strengthen the Global Partnership's contribution to education sector plans and planning process; 2. Promote more inclusive and evidence-based sector policy dialogue; 3. Address challenges in grant development and management; 4. scale up monitoring and evaluation to drive learning and improvement across the Partnership; 5. leverage knowledge and evidence for stronger outcomes; and 6, Diversify Financing in lower middle income and fragile and conflict-affected states. Based on the outcome of the Board meeting, a first draft of the complete strategic plan will be presented to the Board in October, which would then be revised for approval in December, along with an implementation plan.

3.2 The Chair opened the floor for general comments and then requested Board members to prioritize the Key Opportunities in terms of importance and urgency. Board members acknowledged that discipline in addressing the six opportunities was needed. The Board discussed overarching principles included developing the capacity of DCPs, country ownership of the GPE process generally, ensuring the process is inclusive, and drawing upon the Partnership as a resource

3.3 Board members next commented on which of the opportunities should be prioritized. The Chair summarized the discussion, noting a clear consensus that Opportunity 3 on grant development and management is an urgent priority (e.g., to be addressed by October 2015). The first step should include an assessment of functions required for grant management, and the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the different actors involved, including but not limited the Secretariat, SE/ME, LEGs and CA's. Consideration should be given to establishing minimum standards for supervising and managing entities and the possibility of working without an SE/ME. The option of working without an SE/ME was discussed, and it was noted that it is important to consider those risks that the World Bank as Trustee is willing to take. .

3.4 Opportunities 1 and 2 on strengthening GPEs role in supporting credible and effective sector planning processes and leveraging evidence based and inclusive policy dialogue were concluded by the Chair as being the second highest priorities of the Board, with Opportunity 4 on monitoring and evaluation a third priority at some distance, with monitoring and evaluation deemed most important and peer learning following later. A Board member added that while Opportunity 4 is a lower priority in the short term, given the need to focus on grant management, monitoring and evaluation and a results framework do need to go alongside the planning process as the success of a strategic plan hinges on it.

3.5 The Chair concluded the discussion, noting the Secretariat would bring to the Board revised decision language based on the discussion, and would initiate a discussion on Opportunities five and six.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020: STRENGTHENING THE GPE OPERATIONAL MODEL (WORK STREAM 1) PART TWO

11.1 The Secretariat shared a revised decision for consideration based on comments made during the discussion of Work Stream 1 the previous day on Opportunities 1 through 5.

Discussion:

11.2 Board members reiterated the need to prioritize Opportunity 3 and define the functions and responsibilities needed first before changing the operating model. A Board member noted several reviews had already taken place and that the Partnership might instead look at what the issues are with the implementation of the functions and responsibilities in some cases. They reiterated that broad consensus that Opportunities 1 and 2 remain the next most important priorities.

11.3 There was consensus on the proposal to establish a small representative Board reference group to work with the Secretariat on the development of work around Opportunity 3 – improving grant management. One Board member suggested the reference group include the Committees in their consultation. The Chair responded that financial and timing constraints make it difficult to engage the Committees in the process fully before the October Board meeting, but noted that the Chairs of the Committees would be kept abreast of progress made. She noted that the October Board meeting would include one day in retreat style, followed by a one day Board meeting.

11.4 Board members provided suggestions for further fine-tuning, including the need for more discipline in establishing priorities and the deliverables of the various priorities so as not to overstretch the Secretariat and its ability to deliver the highest priorities on time. The Chair noted that the decision language listed the priorities with corresponding timelines in order and suggested being less specific on the exact dates for deliverables in 2016. The Secretariat added that it would provide the Coordinating Committee with an itemized work plan by July 1 and that the Committee would review work completed towards the work plan on a monthly basis and that some of the work under work stream 1 was already underway. Some Board members requested the Board be updated on progress as well while some cautioned against over bureaucratizing. The Chair suggested that the Secretariat send a monthly update to the Board on progress made on strengthening management of GPE grants and its country level platform (Opportunity 3).

11.5 The Chair opened the floor for a discussion on Opportunities 5 and 6 on leveraging knowledge, data, and evidence, and diversification of financing respectively. With respect to Opportunity 5, the Board member representing foundations noted that GPE foundation members were interested in supporting a targeted fund for knowledge and best practice investments if agreed

by the Board, as opposed to supporting the general GPE Fund. Other Board members had noted that establishing funds separate from the GPE Fund would undermine the partnership principle. It was noted that the importance attributed to technical knowledge and sharing it in the Partnership is an important sign of its maturity. With respect to Opportunity 6, the point was made that in order to meet the different needs of DCPs and the need for other strategic investments, including in knowledge exchange, data and capacity development, the Board needed to have a full discussion on the strategic finance issues facing the Global Partnership followed by implications, risks and opportunities associated with the introduction of different approaches to accepting financing for these strategic priorities. The risk of undermining the partnership principle through earmarking and partners advancing their own agenda through GPE mechanisms was noted by one constituency. It was agreed that the Board will have a strategic-level discussion on different approaches to accepting new mechanisms for financing support to GPE at its December 2015 face-to-face Board meeting, including a series of options to consider.

11.6 The CEO emphasized the importance of addressing the issue of financing mechanisms to avoid a need to replenish earlier than planned and the Global Partnership being limited in its grant making. She noted the Secretariat's work on this would not take staff resources from the highest priorities set by the Board as different sections of the Secretariat would be working on each of these initiatives.

11.7 The Chair concluded the discussion, noting the Secretariat would further revise the decision language informed by the discussion for presentation in the afternoon.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020: CONCEPT NOTE (WORK STREAM 2) (BOD/2015/05 DOC 12)

12.1 The Chief Technical Officer, Karen Mundy, gave a brief summary of the Concept Note and the Consultation Process as presented in BOD/2015/05 DOC 12.

Discussion:

12.2 The Board agreed that the Global Partnership vision should fully align with Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

12.3 The Board also discussed the proposed mission statement and agreed to slightly revise the proposed language to emphasize that GPE core funding is primarily to finance basic education whilst allowing for the possibility of additional funding to finance other activities noting that in some countries significant progress has been realized in basic education and that there is no value added of primary education without access to secondary education.

12.4 While commenting on the proposed vision and mission, some Board members stressed that the term "children" should be disaggregated into "girls and boys". Some Board members noted the importance for the Global Partnership to align with the Incheon Declaration focus on "lifelong" education and not to limit the target to "children and youth". Along those same lines, a number of Board members noted the inconsistency between the vision and mission which address different targets "education for all" versus "children and youth". Some Board members noted that the scope of GPE activities should be more explicit focusing on supporting Education Sector Plan development and implementation. Concerns were also raised on the risks of the Global Partnership being spread too thin. The Chair concluded that there is agreement to align GPE's vision with SDG 4 and a slight redraft of the mission to emphasize a focus on financing for basic education. The strategic plan needs

to clearly state the Global Partnership's priority is basic education in low income countries with a focus on the most marginalized.

12.5 Regarding the principles which will underpin the Strategic Plan and operational approach, a consensus was raised to formally state that education is a human right and an enabler of other rights. Some Board Members expressed concern regarding the use of negative terminology such as '…elimination of inequalities and the eradication of poverty' and stated a strong preference for more positively framed principles.

12.6 Finally the Chair invited Board members to briefly comment on the Goals. A number of Board members stressed the need to assess and measure learning outcomes, the importance of data especially for planning and to specify the importance of having good Education Sector Plans. Due to time constraints, the Chair offered to create a representative Board reference group to finalize the Concept Note that will then be launched at the Oslo Summit on July 6-7 2015 as a tool in GPE's Strategic Plan consultation.